

## "THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the annotation "The Royal Berkshire Hospital" in THE LANCET of April 15th, in the last portion of the paragraph you imply that the physicians have practised as surgeons. As senior physician may I beg you to correct the error, as a false impression will naturally be inferred, since there has not been any alteration of the rule whatever in this respect? The preceding physicians as well as those now holding the appointments have and do practise medicine purely and entirely.—I am Sirs, yours faithfully,

CHARLES W. MARRIOTT, M.D. St. And.,  
Reading, April 25th, 1899. M.R.C.P. Lond.

## "FERMENTATION WITHOUT YEAST CELLS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reference to your annotation on this subject which appeared in THE LANCET of April 15th, in Schultzenberger's book on "Fermentation," published in England by H. S. King and Co. (1876), there occurs at page 148 the following statement of M. Béchamp: "Yeast like every living organism shows phenomena of two kinds—those of nutrition and assimilation which are subordinate to the presence of its nutritious principles (sugar, nitrogenous compounds, mineral salts). These various principles, penetrating by endosmose into the cell, undergo there suitable transformations, and are converted into tissues of recent formation in the new cells which are formed by budding. Together with these phenomena of nutrition, and side by side with them other inverse reactions, those of disassimilation, take place, by which the tissues are changed into excrementitious products, unsuited to the life of the cell, and these are eliminated. *The production of carbon dioxide and of alcohol are the consequences of this process and belong to disassimilating reactions.*"

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. INGLIS PARSONS.

Queen-street, Mayfair, W., April 18th, 1899.

## REGISTRATION OF COLONIAL DEGREES

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—A small paragraph in the report of the proceedings of the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council on Feb. 27th last under the heading "Colonial Degrees," deserves the attention of all colonial practitioners and also of all those interested in the higher education of women.

In 1897, Calcutta University conferred its M.B. degree on a woman graduate who was then awarded the "Elgin" scholarship on condition that she obtained a registrable British qualification. Finding that women are not yet admitted to the Fellowship of the Royal Colleges of England and Scotland she passed the examination of the Irish College of Surgeons, and received the diploma of Fellow in May, 1898. Application was made to the Registrar of the General Medical Council, who registered the M.B. degree but refused to register the Fellowship diploma on the grounds that "a colonial qualification can be added to a name on the General Register as an additional qualification, but British qualifications cannot be so added to names on the Colonial List": this is the opinion of Mr. Muir Mackenzie. Part 2 Section 14 of the 1886 Act states that the provisions of the Medical Act, 1858, shall apply in the case of colonial practitioners when registered under the Act of 1886. This lady was registered under the Act of 1886 and therefore she appears entitled to have an additional qualification added to her name on the Colonial Register under Section 30 of the 1858 Act. As the non-registration of this Fellowship diploma debars the holder from appointments to which she legitimately aspires and the Registrar informs me that similar applications have been refused on previous occasions, I have applied to the Privy Council for a direction to the General Medical Council so that the question may be definitely decided, though as it affects many colonial students I should have preferred the application to have been made by the Irish College of Surgeons or the Scottish Association for the Medical Education of Women.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

CHARLES FREDERICK KNIGHT, M.D. R.U.I.  
Edinburgh, April 20th, 1899.

## "A CRITICISM OF THE MORE COMMONLY EMPLOYED TESTS FOR ALBUMIN IN URINE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I observe in THE LANCET of April 22nd a criticism of the tests for albumin. By an odd coincidence I had sent you on March 3rd the result of some experiments made in my laboratory on the delicacy of the common tests. May I ask Mr. Cammidge whether he has verified his statements himself by appeal to his chemical balance or whether he has taken his results from books? I may state that his results do not agree with the results of my experiments.

May I be allowed to express the opinion, without referring specially to Mr. Cammidge's paper, that the prevalent craze for bibliography is against medical progress? It is supposed to show an academic mind, but it should be remembered that owing to outside pressure the academic mind is waking up to discover that it will have to change its methods to keep pace with modern progress. All honour should be paid to those who have advanced medical science in the past, but the details of their work, often obtained by pupils, should not be allowed to become crystallised.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Glasgow, April 24th, 1899.

WALTER COLQUHOUN.

## "SECRET COMMISSIONS AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Every right-minded member of the medical profession must endorse your remarks upon the subject of secret commissions between medical men on the one hand and vendors of surgical instruments on the other. Apart from such illicit compact there appears to me to be another side to the question an ignorance of which may sometimes lead the public to think that a medical man has reached a basis of understanding with those who supply his wants. This is especially likely to be the case as regards ophthalmic surgeons and opticians. Clearly, there are advantages about sending clients to a particular optician, since one's wishes are then more likely to be respected and blunders rectified without additional burden upon the patient's purse. For my own part, therefore, I generally advise my patients to get their glasses from a specified optician and, if necessary, even go to the length of dissuading them from taking my prescription into the first spectacle-maker's shop which they may chance to see after leaving my house. I need scarcely add that my recommendations are the outcome not of any commission, secret or otherwise, but of a wish to send people to a place where I know their wants will be properly attended to. It is possible, nevertheless, that some business men may suspect another and more interested motive to lie at the root of the advice.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
S.

April 22nd, 1899.

## EXTRA-UTERINE FETATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The concluding paragraph of Mr. C. Hamilton Whiteford's paper on a case of ruptured tubal pregnancy in THE LANCET of April 15th touches a point of great importance. In three cases of early rupture of tubal pregnancy the patients or their husbands have informed me that they have practised what the husband calls "withdrawal" to prevent conception, and in other cases, although neither husband nor wife would directly answer the question delicately put, I have strong reason to believe that this practice was adopted. The relation between the unnatural pregnancy and the unnatural coitus cannot be a mere coincidence; and I cannot but believe that the very frequent occurrence of extra-uterine foetation at the present time is the definite result of the adoption of certain means to prevent conception.

Not very long since I was called to see a patient about 50 miles from the place where I live. The medical man in charge as we walked from the station described the symptoms and history of the lady and said that although at first he had suspected pregnancy the husband "had offered to lay him any odds that his wife was not pregnant." Before I went upstairs to see the patient I interviewed the husband and elicited from him that his confidence on this point was due to his having adopted the practice to which